

REVOLUTION



A Belfast Anarchist Bi-Monthly

Issue No. 4 May-June 1986

Six Counties 20p
Elsewhere 25p

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MEETING

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the revolutionary achievements of the Spanish libertarian movement, we are holding a meeting with video and discussion.

It will take place on Wed., 18th June, 8-10pm., at Just Books, 7 Winetavern St., Belfast 1.

Areas to be discussed include:-

1. The Political Forces involved,
2. The Role of Women
3. The Collectives and Committees.

All Welcome.

DROP THE CHARGES!

The so-called 'Kerry Babies' case received a lot of media attention. Joanna Hayes was tortured by Gardai, suffered the attacks of the government inquiry, and was slandered by Justice Lynch. She received support though from the small numbers of feminist and socialist groups throughout the country.

A situation with some similarities came to light in the press recently, when a young woman from Crossmaglen was charged with murder.

Anne-Marie McShane lives with elderly parents, and her five brothers. She has an eight year old son, and has given birth to three other children, who have been adopted.

The new-born baby, she is linked with, was found in Dundalk. The pathologist said the baby died from drowning, and there were signs of 'bruises to the head'.

The RUC claim that Anne-Marie told them that she delivered the baby alone in the bathroom. Realising that it was dead, she hid it in a cupboard, and on the next day, took the body in a plastic bag to Dundalk.

If this is the evidence, why is this young woman charged with murder. Why is she being put through another hell? Was the birth and concealment not enough agony? **DROP THE CHARGES!**

You Loose Some

The N. Ireland Economic Council, the capitalists' advisory body in the north, has warned of increased unemployment in the year ahead. In its annual report, it describes the main reasons as the cut-back in public expenditure, and the lack of local and overseas investment.

In a separate report on population changes the Council argue that the areas already worst affected by unemployment, west of the Bann, will continue to suffer proportionately.

We also learned that the IDB's target of 5,750 job creations for last year, was only half met, with the figure almost at 3,000.

All of this comes as no great surprise, but the appeal of the Council to the British government to increase public expenditure especially in the construction industry, and its warning of the statelet becoming 'ungovernable', shows that local capitalism is on the verge of panic/collapse.

REDUNDANCIES

The recent pullout announcement by Rothmans will put an extra 800 people on the dole in Carrickfergus. This is the latest blow to workers in the 'protestant' areas of east Antrim, coming shortly after the job losses in Hughes Tools and GEC. The multinationals have shown once again their priority for profit at the expense of people.

UNEVEN FIGURES

Some argue that there is a levelling out of poverty in loyalist and anti-unionist areas. However the Council's report shows that the anti-unionist area west of the Bann (Fermanagh, Strabane and Derry) will continue to experience the highest unemployment.

This is because of constant neglect, no new investment, and the increase in population. This increase is largely as a result of the smaller numbers emigrating, in turn caused by the lack of job opportunities

'Grass' Goes

The appeal by 35 people against conviction in the Black 'supergrass' case ended in May. The judges announced they would need some time to consider the evidence. Judgment is expected in June.

This will have significance for the Kirkpatrick case, where the defendants were promised an appeal date in June. They realise however that, because of the backlog of cases, the appeal will unlikely to be heard much before the end of the year.

Importantly, a 'loyalist' supergrass has just been given a 'Royal Pardon'. Budgie Allen who was given 14 years for an attempted sectarian murder, has been released after just two years. This shows the commitment of the NIO to continue the practise of recruiting 'supergrasses'. The courts are expected to continue complying.

Christy Changes Tune

On the 'B' side of his new single ('Make it Work') in aid of the 'Self - Aid Concert' Christy Moore has a song which refers to 'begrudgers' with 'whinging bar stool eloquence' as 'the hallmark of their trade'.

These terms refer to people who disagree with the notion of the 'Self - Aid' concert. Christy presumably realises that many of the people he is referring to are the 'we' in so many of his previous songs — socialists, republicans, anarchists, feminists etc. What's going on, Christy ??

elsewhere. That 'safety valve', as the Council describes emigration, is no longer available.

The recent order for a Royal Navy ship being awarded to Harland and Wolffs, can be seen as compensation to the loyalist workforce. The message to them seems to be, 'you win some, you lose some'. To anti-unionist workers, the message is 'you lose some'.

Brixton and Maghaberry

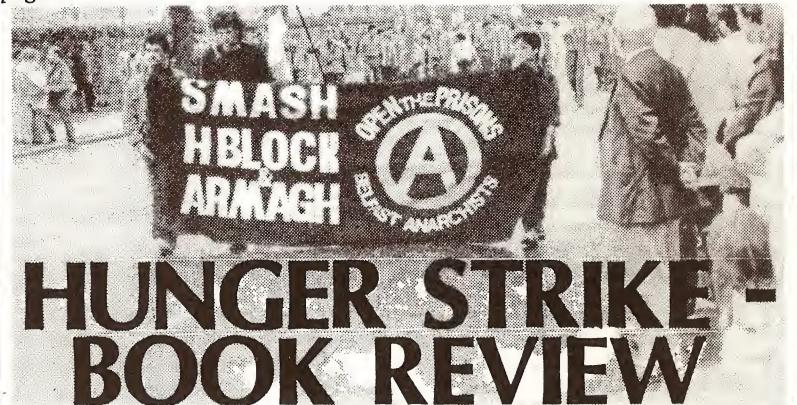


The British state is still using violence against women prisoners. Over 40 stripsearches have taken place in Maghaberry Prison in the last four weeks despite vague hopes that stripsearching of women prisoners might be phased out once the women were transferred from Armagh Jail to Maghaberry in March.

In Brixton Prison two Irish women, Ella O'Dwyer and Martina Anderson have spent 10 months on remand awaiting trial on 'conspiracy' charges. Their trial is currently underway. While in Brixton, Martina Anderson has been strip searched 248 times, Ella O'Dwyer 227. In May they took a case to the High Court to win a ban on strip searches, until they would receive a full hearing of their complaints. Not surprisingly, they lost the case. To grant the ban would delay their 'very important' trial according to the judge.

Messages of support can be sent to:

Martina Anderson D25134
Ella O'Dwyer D25135
H M Prison Brixton, P.O. Box 369
Jebb Ave., London SW2 5XF, England.



Monday May 6th 1986 marked the fifth anniversary of the death of Bobby Sands in Long Kesh. In the intervening period very little has been written about the blanket and no-wash protests and the death of ten men on hunger strike for political status. Writing a book on this would be a daunting task for anyone. The difficulties of recording a period of struggle such as the hunger strike must be enormous. At last, someone has made an attempt at it. The result is a book that is informative and detailed, but overall, disappointing.

Each chapter deals with one of the hunger strikers. Collins, the author, has obviously spent time talking with friends and relatives of each of the ten men. There's quite a lot of information on how these men became politically motivated and involved in the struggle. Some of this will be new to readers though the accounts of the hunger strike itself will be familiar to most people who were involved in various support campaigns. The long and often near forgotten four year blanket and no-wash protests, the devious and hypocritical British state, the lying prison authorities, the corrupt and racist media coverage, the attempted hijackings of coffins and the abuse of some of the dead hunger strikers bodies.

ANALYSIS

In so far as the book covers all these and more aspects of that struggle it is useful and of value. But the style of writing is off-putting - it is romantic and a bit mawkish. This romanticism stems from Collins lack of a clear analysis of Irish history. For instance he frequently refers to a certain 'Irishness' that the hunger strikers and others have. This 'Irishness' is not a socialist or anti-imperialist politics but, rather, it seems to be a unique innate life force that Irish people (and especially Irish men) have. This, rather than worked out politics based on an understanding of British imperialism and capitalism, seems to play a major role for Collins in motivating oppressed people to fight back.

RELIGION

He seems to fall into the trap of seeing the war here as a religious rather than an anti-imperialist one. Sometimes he uses the terms Irish and Catholic interchangeably! To look at Catholicism as a progressive force in Ireland to-day is to show a lack of political understanding which is inexcusable. At one point he states that the 'Irish bishops, on an Irish issue, were cowed into silence' (by English bishops). He also says that the British were effective enough 'to silence

contd n 15

EASTER 1916



The Easter Rising is the cause for much celebration on its 70th anniversary. Republicans have reason to celebrate. The IRA was created, an amalgamation of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the Irish Volunteers, and the trade-union based Irish Citizens Army. A provisional government was declared, with its proclamation remaining the ideological basis of republicanism today — the creation of a nation-state.

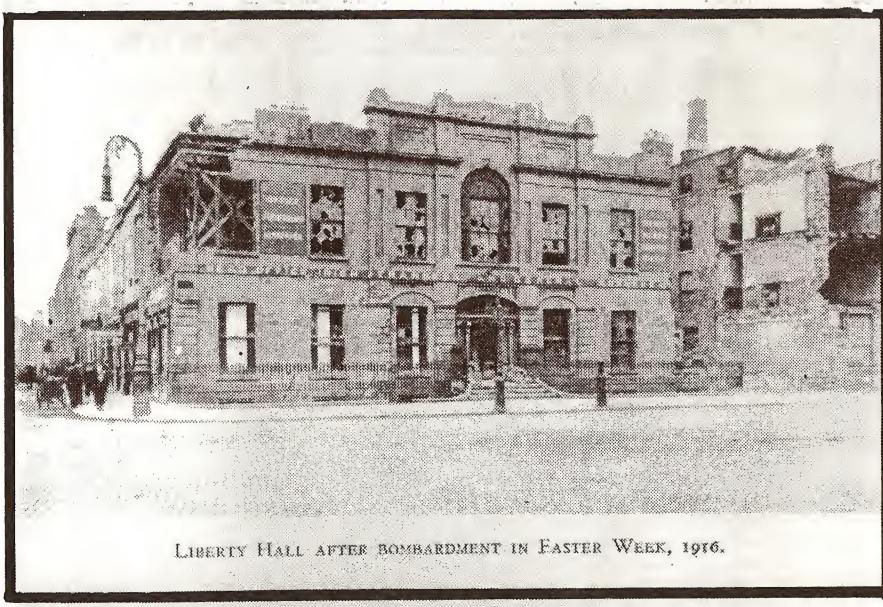
CONTEXT

But the rising has to be seen in the context of the working class struggles of the period. Only three years previous, a protracted and mass conflict shook Irish society, after the employers locked-out members of the militant, syndicalist-inspired, Irish Transport and General Workers Union. The whole of Dublin economic life came to a standstill, with enormous marches and street battles characterising a new class consciousness and combativity. The I.C.A. was formed to defend the workers' right to organise and march.

But there was a defeat, and it proved disastrous. Demoralisation, and unemployment, through blacklisting, lead to thousands of men joining the British army at the outbreak of 'World War One' — economic conscription — with even some ICA people joining up.

It was this frustration, and the opportunity of Britain at war, which caused Connolly and the ICA to join in the rising. In fact Connolly had initially plans for the ICA, who had been drilled by Jack White* (later to become an anarchist) to stage an insurrection, which he hoped would inspire other workers and the I.V. to join later.

* Jack White was imprisoned in Wales after the Rising, for his agitation in protests at the British executions.



Undoubtedly, the executions of the leaders of the Rising, turned the tide of public opinion militantly against the British. But there were other factors which contributed, such as the attempts at forced conscription, and the dawning awareness of imperialist slaughters on the fields of France and Belgium.

There were also signs that the militancy of the working class was showing signs of increasing just before the rising. A new 'war' budget, with increased taxation, led to a successful series of wage demands in the weeks before the Rising. This led to the infamous Martin Murphy encouraging other employees to force redundancies, to weaken the unions, and encourage economic conscription.

AIMS

Back to the Rising, whose aims were laid out in the 'Proclamation of the Republic'. Apart from a vague statement as to the 'right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland', there is no mention of who should control the means of production, distribution, transport, etc. Would there still be bosses and workers? Would parliamentary democracy, based on capitalism and class power, be the basis of a new Ireland?

Because no alternative was proposed, and the ensuing First Dail appeared to reaffirm a class, capitalist society, we must assume that the initial aims of the insurgents did not preclude a capitalist, class society. The proclamation certainly called for a 'Sovereign Independent State', to which all Irish citizens would owe allegiance.

It appears that Connolly and the ICA had to give up their demands for socialism, in order to form an alliance with the IRB.

Anarchism may share an anti-capitalism with other socialists, but we differ on the need to destroy the centralised, hierachical state, which is, after all, the creation of capitalism (whether that's bourgeois or state capitalism). We believe that the state cannot be usefully captured in the working class interest, but must be destroyed and replaced with a federation of neighbourhood and workplace councils (or soviets).

The IT&GWU had been reduced to 5,000 members in 1916, but by 1918, this number had increased to 40,000. It was in this year that a successful, though token, general strike against proposals for forced conscription, showed how working class militancy had grown again.

In the next few years a new phenomenon was to be found. Little supported by socialist or republican groups, or the trade-union bureaucracy, and little-publicised by either school of history, land and factory take-overs occurred throughout Munster, and beyond. Soviets were declared, and banners read 'We make flour, not profits'.

In 1919, a general strike in Limerick against a British military curfew, left the day to day running of the city in the hands of the trades council.

It was the soviets which tested the alliance between socialism and republicanism — and republicanism failed. The first Dail, (1918 - 22), the majority of T.D.'s being in the newly reformed Sinn Fein, condemned the soviets, and local land courts ordered the return of some land, and the secession of take-overs. On occasions the IRA implemented these rulings. It must be said, though, that individual republicans, such as Peadar O'Donnell, did take part in the soviets.

INSURRGENCY

Liam de Paor has described the Easter Rising as 'a classical example of the propaganda-by-deed so widely proclaimed as a tactic by anarchists at the end of the last century'. He is confusing it with the tactic of individual reprisals carried out by some anarchists in that period. Easter was an insurrection, and as such has been a tactic of anarchists, both before and after. However, it has rarely been a purely military insurrection, more usually a proclamation of the libertarian communist society, with the taking over of economic and social life, backed up by military means. Here lies the crux of my criticisms.

Military struggle, by itself, will not lead to a change in economic or social relations. The struggle to remove British imperialism is an integral part of the working classes war against exploitation and authority (of all kinds), but only a part. There is no point (to use a cliche) in over-throwing one set of rulers, only to replace them with another.

SOCIAL REVOLUTION

British imperialism is a dominant force in our country, north and south. Its role, in conjunction with the Free State, is to secure Ireland for NATO and the multinationals. It is conceivable that a realignment of forces (experimented with in the Sunningdale Agreement, and tried again in the Anglo-Irish Accord), of the 'moderate' unionist and nationalist parties, could lead to a conference, a declaration of withdrawal, and an IRA ceasefire. A united capitalist Ireland is conceivable.

The only way a socialist society is possible, and guaranteed, is if the working class make it. Our struggle for British withdrawal must be linked with our struggle for economic and social change. A political revolution, without a social revolution, will only give us new rulers. ■



THE SPANISH REVOLUTION & CIVIL WAR

This year many organisations throughout the world are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War in Spain. For some, like us, it was not only a defence against the Fascists, but also a Revolution. While in Ireland many remember the fight of the volunteers of the Connolly Column for the Republic, fewer know that during the Civil War, anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists developed a libertarian organisation of social life on a large scale.

THE ANARCHISTS

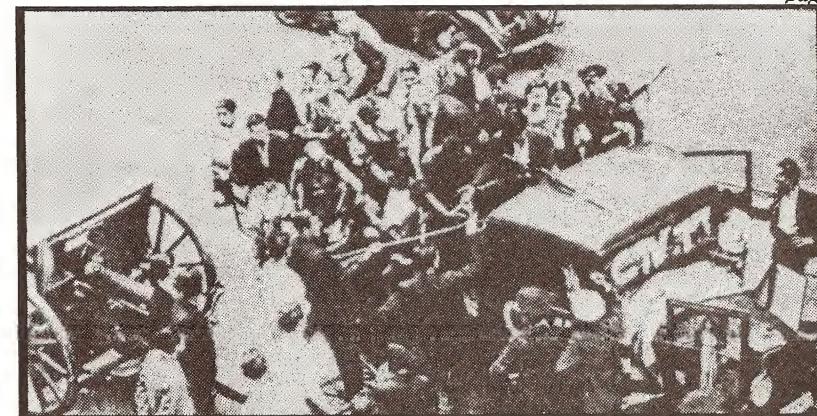
In the anarchist movement the largest group was the 'Confederation National del Trabajo' (CNT), founded in 1911. It consisted of two main ideas, that of Syndicalism in the industrialised north and that of Communalism in the rural south. The other large organisation, the 'Federation Anarchista Iberica' (FAI) was founded in 1927 under the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. They began clandestine work when the CNT was illegal and their offices closed. Both groups organised revolutionary strikes and land seizures. It is widely accepted that the FAI provided the ideology, and the most militant section, of the CNT. On Feb. 16, 1936 a Popular Front (PF) Government, consisting of Republicans, Socialists, Liberals and Communists was elected, not without the support of the anarchists, who didn't boycott the elections as they had in the previous one, stating: 'We gave power to the leftists, convinced... they were the lesser evils.'

FRANCOS REVOLT

After the elections fighting between leftist groups and Fascists increased and eventually ended with the proclamation of the 'Pronunciamiento' of right wing Generals, known as the Franco Revolt on July 18, 1936. But the leftist groups were prepared. Anarchists and Socialists organised weapons, distributed them and freed their prisoners. In the cities the working class built up barricades and were resisting the army. In Barcelona for example, by the evening of July 20 anarchist and syndicalist groups were in control of the city and began to storm barracks, arrested Fascists and burned churches, which were the symbols of the fascist ideology.

THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION

There were two approaches during the fascist uprising. One was to deal with it on purely military terms, the other was to integrate the military fight, and reinforce it with the Social Revolution. Several kinds of self-management were established throughout the country after the peasants took over the land, which was abandoned by landowners who took refuge abroad, or was seized from Fascists. In Catalonia, a Peasants Congress was called together by the CNT on



Sep. 5 and agreed the collectivisation of land under trade union control. Small scale landowners were free to choose between private or collective property. Due to the libertarian history of the Spanish workers 90% were in favour of collectivisation.

THE COLLECTIVES

The payment of peasants, working on common property, was based on the family needs. Specially marked notes were given out which could be exchanged in communal shops, mostly situated in a church. In other places like Andalucia in the south, money was totally abolished. The organisation of the agricultural collectives was based on the anarcho-syndicalist idea of federalism. A general assembly of working peasants in each village elected a committee which was to be responsible for economic administration. The peasants were divided into groups of ten or more, led by a delegate and being allocated an operation to perform. The committee received delegates every evening and called the inhabitants together for general assemblies. The local communes were organised in Cantonal federations which came together in regional federations to organise the exchange of goods, tools and labour for poorer collectives. Other achievements were free services, including rent payment, medical care and old age assistance.

WOMEN REVOLTING

Women took a major part in the social revolution in Spain. Libertarian Women organised in the 'Mujeres Libres', an anarchist organisation linked to the CNT. They fought alongside men in the militias and built up barricades in the street-fights. Although not achieving total emancipation, women struggled for their rights and large steps were made towards an equal society, especially when considering the reactionary Spanish past. Important for this partial liberation was the struggle against the Spanish church, which had spread and maintained the repressive culture of women's oppression. Achievements were made in the recognition of women as workers, who were looking after and educating children. Their payment was included in the family wage of the collectives, where they also were involved in the decision making process. Marriage, one of the main scourges was rejected by almost all anarchists and a mutual agreement was introduced instead. The anti-legislative character of the anarchists was expressed in the treatment of prostitution. It was not forbidden by law and on some occasions prostitutes took over their work places, and in others they were encouraged to live in women's refuges and find alternative work. For the first time women came out on the streets on their own, defending the revo-

lution with their guns or collecting money. The 'Mujeres Libres' propagated the struggle for women's rights within the fight for a social revolution, the question of their liberation was no longer isolated from the class struggle.

SELF-MANAGEMENT

In Catalonia, the most industrialised area in Spain, the CNT members made up the majority. Factories were managed by the workers. An advantage was that many technicians, unlike after the Chinese or Russian revolutions, collaborated with the workers. Daniel Guerin writes: 'A factory under self-management was directed under a managerial committee of five to fifteen members representing the various trades and services. They were nominated by the workers in general assembly and served for two years, half being changed every year.' A central equalisation fund was created to distribute resources fairly. In December 1936, a trade union congress decided to coordinate the various sectors of production into a general organic plan.



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEES

After the fascist insurrection in July, workers built up committees all over the country. Under different names, they had representatives of all organisations existing in the certain area. They were in charge of the life in the village and exercised power. In the committees the CNT and the socialist UGT, which had 1,500,000 members, worked together. In Valencia they formed the Popular Executive Committee together with the trotskyist POUM. Here workers were out on strike to seize a Civil Guard barracks. When the republican Provisional Junta wanted them to dissolve, the CNT-UGT strike committee published a common newspaper. When even they called for a return to work, the rank and file workers showed their selfconfidence in refusing the call. Because of the committees' power in the villages and cities, they were looked at suspiciously by the PF government, called the 'Generalidad'. They tried to destroy the power of the committees either by legalising them or involving the representatives in the state apparatus.

ANARCHISTS AND GOVERNMENT

This wouldn't have worked without the collaboration of the CNT-FAI members, which at first tolerated a PF government and eventually joined it. In September in Catalonia Garcia Olivier rejected 'libertarian communism, which means anarchist dictatorship,' and called for democracy, 'which means collabo-

ration.' In November 4, 1936 anarchist 'leaders' joined the central government holding four minister posts. This policy, which doesn't correspond to the anarchist principle of the destruction of political power, can only be explained within the war situation at this time. For many anarchists the defence of the republic became the first aim and so the revolution was ignored. It was criticised by rank and file CNTistas eg. the Friends of Durruti. Others like the anarchist Santillan, who was a minister, had to regret it bitterly after the fascist victory. He wrote in 1940: 'We knew that it was not possible for the revolution to triumph in the war beforehand. We sacrificed the revolution itself without understanding that this sacrifice also implied sacrificing the aims of the war.' This policy not only destroyed the power of the worker's organisations but also paved the way for the stalinist counterrevolution.

THE COMMUNIST COUNTER REVOLUTION

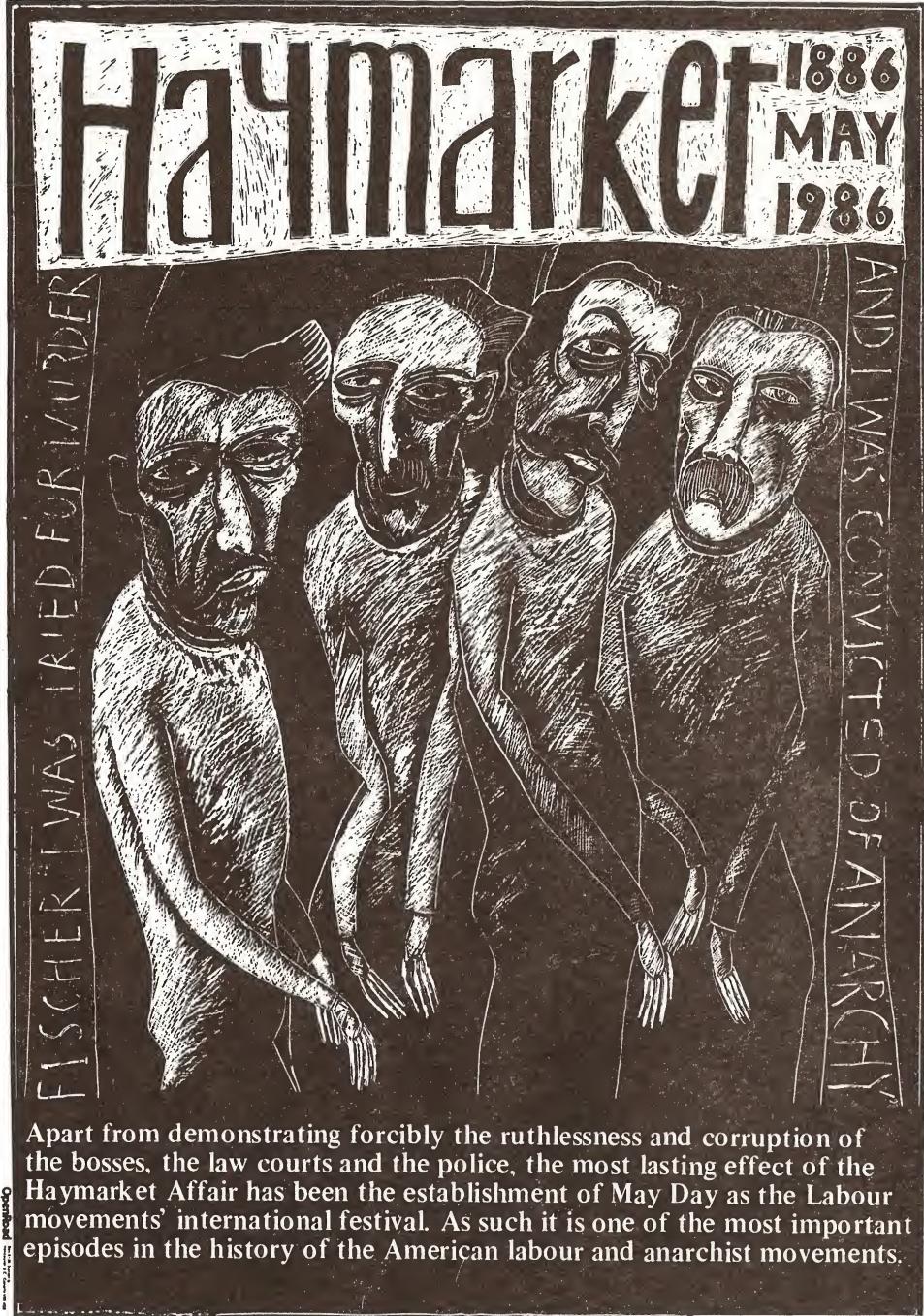
The development of self-management was largely opposed by the Communist Party (CP). The CP, which had not more than 30,000 members at the eve of the revolution, increased their power and influence, because the USSR was the only state to give foreign aid. But they supplied weapons only to Communist dominated groups. In October 1936, the stalinist Minister of Agriculture established a decree, which legalised part of the collectivisations but subjected them to complicated regulations. In May 1937 the coalition government liquidated self-management by military means. In Aragon, tanks under a stalinist commander destroyed the collectives and arrested delegates. Nevertheless, peasants resisted these threats. After forced at pistol point to sign deeds of ownership, they destroyed the contracts and rebuilt the collectives, when the army had gone. With a decree on August 11, 1938 the factories came under the control of the Minister of War Supplies. Directors and inspectors, mostly members of the CP, took over the power.

'In Catalonia, the elimination of Trotskyists and anarcho-syndicalists has already begun; it will be carried out with the same energy as in the USSR'. This commentary appeared in 'Pravda' in December 17, 1937. In the same year after Mayday Communist troops attacked the CNT-UGT committee, which was running the telephone exchange. Here, like everywhere else in the country, many militants lost their lives in attacks by Communists. Snipers of the Communist Fifth Regiment laid ambushes and the NKVD, the stalinist secret police, imprisoned and murdered hundreds of Trotskyists and anarchists. The CP policy of collaboration with the petty bourgeoisie and landowners, their fight against collectivisation and revolutionary committees and for a 'democratic and parliamentary republic of a new kind', brought them the support of many republicans.

THE FASCIST VICTORY

As the war continued, the revolutionary fight was put into the background. The advance of the fascist troops took up more effort. Victories like the heroic defence of Madrid in November 1936 became more difficult as German and Italian military support for the Fascists strengthened. Whole towns were destroyed and the inhabitants massacred. In 1937 German warplanes bombed Guernica, the first brutal incident of international fascist involvement. Finally in January 28, 1939 fascist troops entered Madrid and a oppressive dictatorship in Europe began, to last for almost 40 years.





INDUSTRIALISATION

After the American Civil War (1861-1865) industrialisation began to spread rapidly throughout the country. An increase in immigration from Western Europe (esp. from Ireland, following the Famine of 1845) led to a large pool of labour available to service this industrial expansion. As industrialisation grew so too did the labour movement. A great depression in 1873-1879 involving lockouts, strikes, unemployment and extreme poverty gave new impetus to emerging socialist, anarchist and labour organisations. Class divisions were becoming more and more intensified.

EIGHT-HOUR DAY

From the early 1870's campaigns for an eight-hour day had been waged by various unions and groups. And though various Federal and State laws were passed in favour of the eight-hour day they were generally of little effect since most employers ignored them. In 1884 a congress of the Federation of Organised Trades and Labour Unions decided that workers should impose an eight-hour day as the legal working day by direct action. It was agreed it should come into effect on May 1st 1886, traditionally a day of celebration of renewal and regeneration in many different cultures. In Chicago, the International Working People's Association (IWPA), a militant anarchist socialist organisation with 100 branches throughout the country, and the Central Labour Union, a revolutionary union which had broken from the established labour organisation in 1884, began organising for the eight-hour day several months before 1st May 1886.

1st MAY 1886

Labour strikes broke out throughout the country on 1st May for the demand of the eight-hour day. One of the main centres of the movement was Chicago, and there the struggle between the workers and their bosses became intense and bitter. All day meetings and demonstrations were held and about 40,000 people went out on strike. Trouble began on the following Monday when a meeting of the striking employees of the McCormick Harvester Company was attacked by police. Two people were killed and many injured. To protest against this a mass meeting was called in Haymarket Square on May 4th. It was addressed by Parsons, Spies and Fischer among others (most of these being members of the IWPA). It was a quiet and orderly meeting. Even the local Lord Mayor, who attended the meeting, reported to the police, as he left it, that everything was fine. Towards the end of the meeting when most people had already left, the police arrived and ordered the meeting to disperse. The police then baton charged the meeting. Suddenly, without warning, a dynamite bomb was thrown into the police ranks. One policeman was killed and several others injured. Immediately the police opened fire with their revolvers and, in the confusion, killed seven policemen and injured many more.

THE CHICAGO MARTYRS

It was never ascertained who actually threw the bomb. All the speakers at the Haymarket meeting and other prominent anarchists were arrested and eventually eight of these were put on trial. Effectively, the hard core of anarchist leadership in the Chicago labour movement were put away. Meanwhile the entire press and bourgeoisie of Chicago and the whole country began shouting for the execution of the prisoners. Civil liberties were suspended, and the police were given large amounts of financial and moral aid by the business community to carry out full scale raids and arrests. The general atmosphere was one of terror. With this backdrop the trial of the eight began.



THE TRIAL

The trial became the most infamous frame-up in the history of the United States. The public mind was inflamed by atrocious stories circulated in the press against the leaders of the strike, the jury was packed, the District Attorney announced in open court that not only were the arrested men on trial, but that 'anarchy is on trial' and it should be exterminated. The judge repeatedly denounced the accused from the bench, influencing the jury against them. On 20th August 1887 all eight men were found guilty of murder - on the grounds that their political propaganda had incited revolutionary violence and might have influenced an unknown bomber. Seven were sentenced to death and one to fifteen years imprisonment. Despite appeals to the Illinois Supreme Court and the United States Supreme Court, and a huge national and international campaign for their release the eight men got nowhere. On 3rd November 1887 two of seven awaiting their death sentences were given life sentences. Lingg, one of the remaining five, killed himself in his prison cell. The other four - Parsons, Spies, Fischer and Engel were hanged on November 11th 1887. Six years later a new liberal Governor of Illinois, Altgeld, pardoned and released the three men still in prison and published a lengthy statement condemning the whole trial.

THE LEGACY

Once the shock and tragedy of the Haymarket wore off, the idea of May Day was revived and the campaign for an eight-hour day resumed. In 1890 a national day of strikes and demonstrations was called. It now became international - the impact of the Haymarket Affair had spread the idea far and wide. In subsequent years the history of the anarchist martyrs has tended to be played down with most emphasis being placed on the eight-hour day alone. Yet it is impossible to separate one from the other - they are both integral parts of the same particular struggle and the state's response to it.

It's ironic and sad that 100 years later May Day has become anything but a revolutionary celebration of working people. Instead we have TUCs organising May Day Marches on Saturdays so as not to upset the bosses and the (British) State declaring a Bank Holiday weekend the first Monday in May to pre-empt any notion of working people themselves taking the day! It's important to remember the history of May Day and begin to reclaim it as what people struggled and died for - International Workers' Day. ■

'the Irish Catholic Church'. Statements such as these imply that the Catholic Church would, without British pressure, have supported the hunger strike. History has shown that the Catholic Church rarely has supported struggles of a revolutionary nature. The hunger strike was such a struggle.

SUPPORT

In an attempt to show the widespread support for the hunger strike he gives us two long detailed case histories of 'Jean' and 'Kevin'. How they slowly became involved in the campaign and how their political consciousness grew as a result. The level of activity and agitation in almost every town and village in the country was unprecedented in the last sixty years. But he does not give us a history of the campaigns and support groups involved. This surely is very important and needs to be analysed and recorded. Instead we get two personal histories which are not only too long and a bit repetitive, but do not give us enough of a general insight.

For all that the book is worth a read. Granted it can be infuriating at times - especially when there are so many digressions and anecdotes which are not always to the point - it could be edited down to two-thirds its size! But it is at times very moving - reading the history of the prison struggles and the hunger strike rekindle the anger at the British State's attempt at criminalisation of opposition.

The Irish Hunger Strike : Tom Collins. White Island Book Co. Stg £6.95

Heil Heubeck!

Ulsterbus boss, Heubeck, is at it again. He has declared that drivers are responsible for any cash stolen from their depots.

The Transport union in the Antrim depot have gone out on strike, when a driver was suspended, and two others threatened with suspension, after £25 was stolen from their cash boxes, in a robbery at their depot.

If his office is robbed, would Heubeck sack himself? Now there's an idea!

Whose Side Are You On?

Gerry Adams has accused the Catholic 'professional' class of abandoning their co-religionists, in the working class, by their acceptance of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and aspirations to improve their own position.

Since when were Catholic professional people ever on the side of working class people, other than to further their own 'aspirations'? One example is the use of the civil rights issues to build political careers at Westminster and Europe.

Since they were never on our side, they couldn't abandon us. Religion is not a 'side'. Class is.

< Papers received >

- Direct Action. Paper of the DAM-IWA 20p
- Libertarian Workers Bulletin. An Australian paper.
- Open Road, Canadian, summer ed. 75p
- Nottingham Anarchist News 10p

LIBERTARIAN A
BIG MOUNTAIN DIRECT ACTION ART
OpenRoad
DIREC NOTTINGHAM ANARCHIST NEWS
ACTION

Chernobyl Today, Windscale?



Criticisms of the nuclear plant explosion at Chernobyl in the Ukraine, by the western governments, is nothing less than a hypocritical addition to the propaganda war. In the days following the explosion we had outrage expressed at the USSR's 'failure to inform the west', and reassuring claims that 'the west couldn't possibly have an accident like that'.

There can be no doubt that the accident is a disaster. That in the long term hundreds of people, both in the USSR and in W. Europe will die from radiation. Whether a nuclear power station is 'Communist' or 'Capitalist', whether it is production for civilian or military use, it is a constant and deadly threat to the lives of people living close by.

Because radiation leaks cannot be seen, but only monitored electronically, then it takes a major accident, such as that at Chernobyl, or the one at Three Mile Island in the USA, to alert people on an international scale to the lethal dangers of these plants.

The western states instant reaction was one of almost glee. 3,000 people were claimed to have died. 'It couldn't happen here'. But the exaggerated and smug criticisms were soon to be moderated.

As it became apparent that the clouds of escaped radioactivity were making their way across Europe, then the extent of the damage, and dangers of contamination, were scaled down.

Somewhere between the two poles of government advice, lay the example of a British Dept. of the Environment official on Radio 4 on May 6th. He said that people in isolated rural areas should not drink rain water ... 'but if that is their only source, then they should drink it, as we

don't want them to be dehydrated'!

The allegation of the USSR not releasing enough information, is one which could be applied to every state with nuclear power. Full news of the Three Mile Island accident was only released three days later. One of the most serious accidents, previous to Chernobyl, took place at Windscale (now Sellafield) in 1957. Twenty years later new information was still being released.

As explained in the last issue of *Ainriail*, the Sellafield plant in particular is shrouded in secrecy and deceit. The dumping of extra 400 kilogrammes of radio-active waste into the Irish sea was disclosed only three days later. The governments own investigation, the Black Report, reveals that it was lied to by senior management at the plant.

The constant, and 'legal', discharges of radioactivity into the Irish Sea is killing people, slowly but surely. The 300 'leaks' to have been recorded in its lifetime, have added fatalities to this figure.

Sellafield is a nuclear reprocessing plant, with more deadly material and waste (including plutonium) than at any ordinary nuclear power station such as Chernobyl. An accident at one of its 18 waste storage tanks, claims the United Nations Youth Association, would be ten times worse than the one at Chernobyl. If that happens, we can kiss each other goodbye!

I suppose we could always change the name — again!

POSTSCRIPT

Fire broke out at a nuclear reactor in Heysham, during the controversy over the Ukrainian accident. The reactor was closed for several weeks, and we were told, 'damage was being assessed'. ■